



FACULTY OF ARTS
CHARLES UNIVERSITY
IN PRAGUE



PRAGUE CENTRE FOR JEWISH STUDIES

Course: Contemporary Israeli Culture, Society and Religion



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Course Description:

The course introduces participants to the basic topics addressed by Israeli studies today, in particular as they relate to the society, culture and religion of the modern State of Israel. Special emphasis is placed on the controversies surrounding the integration of minorities and minority rights, with a view towards the country's current legislation. The course will also look at Jewish society's current divisions along ethnic lines, including their influence on socio-cultural processes. Attention is further paid to the interaction between Israel and the diaspora, including growing anti-Semitism in connection with the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or disputes over halakhic practices. The course concludes with a discussion of possible future developments while taking into account social and demographic data and the turbulent situation in the Middle East.

Course outline for the winter semester:

- Definition of Israeli studies – main challenges faced by the field.
- Demographic and social contexts – contemporary trends in the State of Israel.
- “A Jewish and Democratic State”: Ethnocracy or democracy?
- The dilemma of multiculturalism: Specific aspects of Israeli legislation.
- The diversity of Israeli minorities: Ethnic, ethno-religious and religious groups.
- Ashkenazim, Sephardim, Mizrahim: Inter-ethnic divisions of Israeli Jewish society.
- Orthodox, Conservative, Reform: Different streams of Judaism and their impact.
- The institution of the army in terms of socialization and enculturation.
- Understanding to Israeli-Palestinian differing narratives.

Course outline for the spring semester:

- Israeli Jewish identity/ies in the third millennium.
- Israelis and the Shoa: Ways of reflecting across three generations.
- Communicating vessels: The State of Israel and anti-Semitism in the diaspora.
- Contemporary prospects for European Jews: Aliyah, assimilation, anti-Semitism?
- Being Jewish according to halakhah: Conversion and intermarriage.
- Gender and Judaism I: The situation of Orthodox feminists using the example of the “Women of the Wall”.
- Gender and Judaism II: Women ordination as rabbis.
- Start-up nation or Theocracy: Possible future developments.



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Readings:

- BELT, D. „Zapomenutí věřící: Arabští křesťané“. / Forgotten Believers: Arab Christians/ *National Geographic*. 8 (2009), č. 6, s. 34–53.
- BEN-DAVID, B. State of the Nation Report: *Society, Economy and Policy 2014*, Herbert M. Singer Annual Report Series. Jerusalem: Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel, 2014.
- COHEN, S. A. – SHAIN, M. (eds.). *Israel: Culture, Religion and Society 1948–1998*. Jewish Publications. South Africa – Ndabeni – Western Cape: The Rustica Press, 2000.
- COHEN, A. – SUSSER, B. *Israel and the Politics of Jewish Identity: The Secular-Religious Impasse*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.
- DELLAPERGOLA, S. *Population Trends and Options in Israel and in the Diaspora*. The Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI), 2011.
- DESHEN, S. (ed.) *Israeli Judaism: The Sociology of Religion in Israel*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1995.
- DOWTY, A. “Is Israel Democratic? Substance and Semantics in the ‘Ethnic Democracy’ Debate” *Israel Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1999, pp. 1-15.
- DOWTY, A. *The Jewish State: A Century Later*. Berkeley – California: University of California Press, 1998.
- DOWTY, A. *Critical Issues in Israeli Society. Series on Jewish and Israeli Studies*. London: Praeger Publishers, 2004.
- GITELMAN, Z. (ed.) *Religion or Ethnicity: Jewish Identities in Evolution*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2009.
- GOLDSCHIEDER, C. *Israeli Society in the 21st Century*, Brandeis University Press, 2015.
- GOLDSCHIEDER, C. *Israel's Changing Society: Population, Ethnicity, and Development*. Oxford: Westview Press, 2002.
- HALPERIN-KADDARI, R. *Women, Religion and Multiculturalism in Israel*. Ramat Gan – Zivion: Bar Ilan University, 2001.
- HALPERIN-KADDARI, R. *Women in Israel: a state of their own*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.
- HERZOG, H. Women in Israeli Society. In Rebhun, U. – Waxman, Ch. I. (eds.). *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*. (195–220) Hanover – London: Brandeis University Press, 2004.
- LASSNER, J. – TROEN, S. I. *Jews and Muslims in the Arab World: Haunted by Pasts Real and Imagined*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.
- LIEBMAN, CH.S. – KATZ, E. *The Jewishness of Israelis: Responses to Guttman Report*. Albany: New York State University Press, 1997.
- MAMAN, D. – BEN-ARI, E. – ROZENHEK, Z. (eds.) *Military, State and Society in Israel*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 2001.
- MORRIS, B. *1948: The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven, 2008.
- PORAT, D. “The International Working Definition of Antisemitism and Its Detractors“. *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* V: 3, 2011. http://www.kantorcenter.tau.ac.il/sites/default/files/DinaPorat5%209_0.pdf
- REBHUN, U. – WAXMAN, Ch. I. (eds.). *Jews in Israel: contemporary social and cultural patterns. Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry series*. Hanover – London: Brandeis University Press, 2004.
- REKHESS, E. *The Arab Minority in Israel: An Analysis of the “Future Vision” Documents*. Dorothy and Julius Koppelman Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations, American Jewish Committee, April 2008, 39 pages.
- SHENKAR, M. *The Politicization of Israel Studies*. Beer Sheva: Ben Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2012.
- SMOOHA, S. Minority Status in an Ethnic Democracy: The Status of the Arab Minority in Israel. In *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 13 (1990), č. 3, s. 389–413.
- SMOOHA, S. Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype. In *Israel Studies* 2 (1997), č. 2, s. 198–241.
- ŠEDINOVÁ, M. Etnicko-náboženská struktura Státu Izrael. In Veselý, Z. a kol. *Etnická různorodost jako zdroj konfliktů*. Praha: Oeconomica, 2005, s.65–76.



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- SCHAM, P. – POGRUND, B. – GHANEM, A. Introduction to Shared Narratives – A Palestinian-Israeli Dialogue. In *Israel Studies* 18 (2013), č. 2, s. 1–10.
- SHAFIR, G. – PELED, Y. *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- SHEFFER, G. Israel-Diaspora Relations in Comparative Perspective. In Barnett, M. N. (ed.) *Israel in Comparative Perspectives: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom*. Albany: State University of New York, 1996. s. 53-86.
- STERN, Y.Z. “Facing Painful Choices: Law and Halakha in Israeli Society,” Avi Sagi and Ohad Nachtomy, Eds. *The Multicultural Challenge in Israel*, Academic Studies Press, 2009.
- YARON, T. Carnival Fears: Moroccan Immigrants and the Ethnic Problem in the Young State of Israel. In *The Journal of Israeli History*. 18 (1997), č. 1, s.73–103.
- YIFTACHEL, O. *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity in Israel/Palestine*. Philadelphia: Pennpress, 2006.
- ZOUFALÁ, M. *Judaismus a ženy v Izraeli. /Judaism and women in Israel/*. Praha: Karolinum, 2012, in Czech.
- ZOUFALÁ, M. “Judaism and Divorce Practices in the Modern State of Israel”. In *Culturologia*, 1(2), 2012, in English.
- ZOUFALÁ, M. “The Ordination of Women as Rabbis – Prospects of Female Believers in the State of Israel”. In *Studia Ethnologica Pragensia*, 2/2013, pp. 59-73, in Czech.
- ZOUFALÁ, M. “Israeli Studies – a new academic discipline seeking its identity”, in Sládek, Pavel – Zdichynec, Jan-Zoufalá, Marcela /eds./: *Židovská studia ve 21. století (Jewish Studies in 21st Century)*, Historie - Otázky - Problémy 2013/1 - FF UK, Praha 2013, pp. 19-25, ISSN 1804-1132, in Czech.

Recommended websites:

Yedioth Ahronoth: www.ynetnews.com

Haaretz: <http://www.haaretzdaily.com/>

The Jerusalem Post: <http://www.jpost.com/>

Central Bureau of Statistics: http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/cw_usr_view_Folder?ID=141

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.israel-mfa.gov.il/>

Final assessment is based on oral presentation during the Israel Week (see below) and written test.

Prague Centre for Jewish Studies is annually organizing “**Israel Week at Charles University: The Future of Israel Studies in the Czech Republic**”. The project’s aim is to identify the main subjects of Israel studies covered by Czech and foreign scholars while also forging ties between the Czech academic world and Israeli and other international institutions. The project serves as a starting point for accreditation of M.A. program in Israel studies at Charles University’s Faculty of Arts.